

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

INTERIM

50 Front St.
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SESSION

State Capitol Building
Juneau, Alaska 99801

SENATOR BERT STEDMAN REPRESENTATIVE JIM ELKINS

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Shellfish Farming Legislation Going to Governor

(JUNEAU) – House Bill 198 “An act relating to Aquatic farming” unanimously passed the Senate Wednesday. “HB 198 will get the ball rolling on Aquatic farming for Geoducks in Southeast Alaska,” said Senator Burt Stedman (R-Sitka) on the Senate floor.

“I’m pleased to see unanimous support for Southeast Alaska from both the Senate and the House” said Representative Jim Elkins (R-Ketchikan). “This bill is a great compromise between the state and the industry and will help open up new business in Southeast Alaska.”

House Bill 198, sponsored by Representative Elkins, amends the state’s Aquatic Farming Act to allow aquatic farms to continue to operate in compliance with a recent Supreme Court decision. In order to be implemented, a change in statute is required. HB 198 also allows shellfish farmers to harvest and sell “insignificant populations” of wild shellfish stocks on their aquatic farm sites.

Just before the unanimous vote of approval by the Senate today, Senator Stedman stated, “This legislation is the product of industry members and the administration working to find a compromise.”

“HB 198 is on its way to Governor Murkowski for signing. This is a great day for Southeast Alaska,” said Representative Elkins, after the unanimous vote in the Senate. “Senator Stedman and I have worked hard together to ensure geoduck farming can begin in earnest this spring.”

Senator Stedman added, “In Washington geoduck farming is a \$28 million dollar industry. Now that work can begin in Southeast Alaska, I expect our industry to surpass theirs by leaps and bounds.” Representative Elkins added, “This will be a huge boost to geoduck farming in Southeast Alaska, for years the players have fought over this issue. Senator Stedman and I are pleased to be able to finally solve this feud once and for all.”

House Bill 198 is now heading to the Governor’s Office for signing, sometime in the next few weeks.

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